

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are pending in the application. In the outstanding office action, all claims stand rejected. In keeping with the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Properly labeled replacement drawings are submitted herewith.

In response to the rejection of claim 7, that claim has been amended to overcome the rejection.

In response to the rejection of claim 1 as anticipated by either Evans or Martus, claim 1 has been amended to positively recite, in part, a body extending along an axis and having a non-threaded outer side surface sized for insertion into the female member threaded aperture, with the body defining first and second axial ends. The first axial end of the body is positionable in the threaded aperture to face out of the threaded aperture for contact with a tip of the male member. A wedge projects from the first axial end of the body, with the wedge having an inner engagement surface adapted to engage the insertion end of the male member and an outer engagement surface adapted to engage the threaded aperture of the female member, and with the wedge being sufficiently pliant to deflect radially outward in response to an insertion force applied to the male member.

By comparison, and using the number scheme employed in the office action to refer to the references, the “wedge 2” of Evans shown in Fig. 1 does not face out of the threaded aperture, but instead the body 1 is flipped 180 degrees such that the wedge 2 faces into the threaded aperture. Further, although the blank 1 initially is devoid of threads, the whole point of the reference is to form threads on the blank. For example, one need look no further than the title of Evans to see the device is for forming threads on the external surface of the blank. Consequently, the reference does not disclose a non-threaded outer surface on the body. Therefore, there can be no anticipation based on Evans.

Further, Evans cannot support a *prima facie* case of obviousness, as there would be no suggestion to turn the body 1 around (flip the body 180 degrees) in the aperture, as such a step would destroy the operation of the reference by making it impossible to use the punch 10 shown in Fig. 3. The inability to form the threads destroys the principle of operation of the reference and renders the reference unsuitable for its intended purpose. Accordingly, there would be no suggestion to make the needed change.

The set screw on the Martus reference has a threaded outer surface. Eliminating the threads would render the headless set screw of the reference entirely inoperable, making it impossible for the set screw to stay put inside the threaded aperture. Moreover, the end A11 does not face outwardly, and the surface A17 is not positioned “engage the threaded aperture of the female member” as presently claimed. Instead, the surface A17 contacts the separate body 14. Martus cannot anticipate claim 1.

Further, Martus cannot support a *prima facie* case of obviousness, as there would be no suggestion to turn the set screw around (flip the screw 180 degrees) in the aperture, as such a step would destroy the operation of the reference by making it impossible to use the tool of Fig. 8, because access to the aperture 11 would be completely blocked. The inability to turn the set screw destroys the principle of operation of the reference and renders the reference unsuitable for its intended purpose. Accordingly, there would be no suggestion to make the needed changes.

Claim is in allowable form, as are all claims that depend from claim 1.

Claim 9 has been amended to positively recite, in part, a locking mechanism having a body extending along an axis, the body defining a generally cylindrical outer side surface sized for insertion into the aperture of the second connection member and having first and second axial ends. A wedge projects from the first axial end of the body, with the wedge having an inner engagement surface adapted to engage the tip of the male first connection

member and a substantially smooth outer engagement surface adapted for contact with the threaded aperture of the female second connection member. The wedge is sufficiently pliant to deflect radially outward in response to an insertion force applied to the first connection member.

By comparison, the “wedge 2” of Evans shown in Fig. 1 does not the tip of the male first connection member. Instead, the punch 10 is devoid of threads. Moreover, the wedge 2 faces into the hole in the die 6, and thus cannot face out of the hole in the die to contact the first connection member. Again, the whole point of the reference is to form threads on the blank. Consequently, the reference does not disclose a non-threaded outer surface on the body. Therefore, there can be no anticipation based on Evans.

Moreover, Evans again cannot support a *prima facie* case of obviousness, as there would be no suggestion to turn the body 1 around (flip the body 180 degrees) in the aperture to make the wedge 2 face out to contact the tip of the male first connection member, as such a step would destroy the operation of the reference by making it impossible to use the punch 10 shown in Fig. 3. The inability to form the threads destroys the principle of operation of the reference and renders the reference unsuitable for its intended purpose. Accordingly, there would be no suggestion to make the needed change.

The set screw on the Martus reference has a threaded outer surface. Eliminating the threads would render the headless set screw of the reference entirely inoperable, making it impossible for the set screw to stay put inside the threaded aperture. Moreover, the end A11 does not face outwardly to contact the tool, and the surface A17 is not positioned “engage the threaded aperture of the female member” as presently claimed. Instead, the surface A17 contacts the separate body 14. Martus cannot anticipate claim 1.

Further, Martus cannot support a *prima facie* case of obviousness, as there would be no suggestion to turn the set screw around (flip the screw 180 degrees) in the aperture, as

such a step would destroy the operation of the reference by making it impossible to use the tool of Fig. 8, because access to the aperture 11 would be completely blocked. The inability to turn the set screw destroys the principle of operation of the reference and renders the reference unsuitable for its intended purpose. Accordingly, there would be no suggestion to make the needed changes.

Accordingly, claim 9 is in allowable form, as are all claims that depend from claim 9.

Claim 17 has been replaced by new claim 23. Claim 23 is not anticipated by Evans or Martus, and cannot be rendered obvious by either reference, for at least the reasons given above with respect to claims 1 and 9. Accordingly, claim 23 is in allowable form, as are all claims that depend from claim 23.

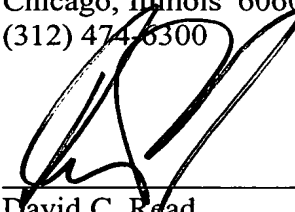
In view of the above discussion, applicant submits that each of the presently pending claims is in immediate condition for allowance. Accordingly, the examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue. It is believed that no fees are necessary in connection with the present Amendment. However, in the event that any fees are due, kindly charge the cost thereof to our Deposit Account No. 13-2855.

Respectfully submitted,

MARSHALL, GERSTEIN, & BORUN LLP
6300 Sears Tower
233 South Wacker Drive
Chicago, Illinois 60606-6357
(312) 474-6300

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By:



David C. Read
Reg. No.: 39,811
Attorney for Applicants